

I am a 33 year old divorced single mother with two children, under the age of ten. At the end of August 2009, my job was eliminated and I was forced to find a job in a very poor economy of Adrian, MI. Though I remained positive, I thought with an Associate's Degree in Business I would have no problem finding a job. All of the jobs I found to apply for in my field required a Bachelor's degree; I applied anyway hoping my experience along with my Associate's Degree would be enough to at least get an interview.

After three months of rejection letters, I learned of the opportunity to finish my degree from *Southern MI Works* through the *No Worker Left Behind* program, so I applied. I went through the teaching seminar and my name was added to the long waiting list. I was encouraged by *Southern Michigan Works* to apply for a Federal Pell Grant in order to start classes for the upcoming winter semester at *Siena Heights University*. I applied for the Federal Pell Grant. I obtained an education waiver, and enrolled full time in classes in January of 2010 with a Major in Social Work. Don't be mislead the Federal Pell Grant does not cover all the expenses of my tuition and books; I have students loans putting me in debt, right now over \$12,000. With my transferred credits from my Associate's Degree, I enrolled as a junior with a 3.7 GPA.

I struggle to support my two children on the unemployment income I receive, but we manage. I complete the Fall semester with a 4.0, yes all A's because I take my education and plans to find a job seriously. Currently, I am attending Summer classes and am enrolled for Fall semester full time. I remain still waiting for the "No Worker Left Behind" assistance. Every time Congress doesn't pass "the bill" my unemployment stops and I wonder how long I will be able to pay the bills. I have come no where close to collecting for 99 weeks as I know many in my community have. I understand Congress' concern to get those who are taking advantage of the system off it but why am I being punished?

I did not ask for my job to be eliminated or ask for an economy where there is one job for every six people. I have returned to college to get a degree in a job field that is in need of workers. We are encouraged to go back to school and get the education we need to get another job yet on the other hand want to take away the little income I have and force me to make the decision to continue my educational plans or quit and ruin my chances of getting my degree to get a job.

What good is my education waiver? I am definitely a "worker" being left behind!

Robin Hinman